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MORE MONEY THAN BRAINS

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

BY

PERCIVAL P. HALL

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FITZGERALD PUBLISHING CORP'N, 18 Vesey St., N. Y.

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More Money Than Brains

CHARACTERS

PIERRE ARTO
A struggling artist who has succeeded better in getting into debt than with painting.

HARRY BRIGHT
PIERRE'S *constant companion. Carefree and a born schemer.*

JIMMIE MAGUIRE
The landlady's son. A typical street urchin.

MRS. MAGUIRE
A sharp, stubborn, Irish boarding-house keeper.

SAMUEL COHEN.....*A Seventh Avenue credit clothier.*

MR. SNYDER.....*A German grocer.*

MR. JOHN STYLES
PIERRE'S *uncle. A well-to-do, elderly man.*

MRS. JOHN STYLES.....*Of a nervous, hysterical type.*

DETECTIVE SLICK
An officious official who would not turn his back on honest graft.

TIME.—*The present.* LOCALITY.—*New York City.*
TIME OF PLAYING.—About 50 minutes.

COSTUMES

Appropriate to characters portrayed.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES

Bed, table, cooking utensils, screen, skeleton and rack, canvases, easel, pallette and brushes, check book and pen, night shirt, imitation jewels, paper and pencil, stage money, auto horn.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

As seen by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right hand; L., left hand; C., center of stage; D.R., door right; UP means toward back of stage; DOWN toward footlights.

More Money Than Brains

ACT I

SCENE.—*Interior of a sparsely furnished studio. Door* R., *window* R., *in rear flat. In front of window a bedstead and between it and door a rack from which a skeleton is suspended. This is so placed, when door is opened it is hidden from view.* UP L. *a table upon which are a small stove and cooking utensils, hidden by a screen.* DOWN L. *an easel and artist's stool.* DOWN R. *an armchair.* DISCOVERED PIERRE *deep in thought, seated on stool, elbows on knees and holding letters between legs. A knock is heard on the door.* PIERRE *too deep in thought to notice. A second and louder knock, but no response. Finally, the door is slowly opened and* HARRY ENTERS. HARRY *tip-toes over to* PIERRE *and slaps him on the back, nearly knocking him off the stool.*

PIERRE *(rising quickly, upsetting stool and rubbing back).* Holy smokes, Harry. Have a heart. Do you want to break my back?

HARRY. What the deuce is the matter with you? You look and act as though you had lost your last friend.

PIERRE. Worse than that, Harry.

HARRY. What's the trouble? Someone buy a picture?

PIERRE. No, but my source of income has just been cut off and I am going to be dispossessed in about one

hour. The tailor is going to take the very clothes off my back and I guess the grocer and butcher will demand an autopsy to secure last night's supper.

HARRY. I see. The uncle won't stand it any longer, eh?

PIERRE. Right. I just received this letter stating that it was of no use to ask him to extend my time, that so long as I was determined to stick to art, I must make it provide my livelihood. Well, Harry, my dear boy, I am going to make the uncle sit up and take notice yet.

HARRY. That's a little better spirit, Pierre. Perhaps we can make the old man come around before long.

PIERRE. Before long will have to be pretty soon if it is going to do me any good. Why, yesterday and every day before that for the last two weeks I have been busy all day long forcing a sweet smile and telling a long sad story to the landlady and the different tradespeople of how, if they come tomorrow, I will surely be able to pay them with the money I expect from my uncle. To-day I shall, no doubt, meet my Waterloo. I have put them off and put them off until they won't stand it any longer. I'm expecting to see the landlady bounce in any minute.

HARRY. Why not lock your door and let her knock until she tires of it. She will think you are out.

PIERRE. Oh, no. You don't know Mrs. Maguire. She knows every move I make and a whole lot I don't make. I can't pass in or out of this house but that she knows it, and when I turn the corner I am watched by the grocer, at the next corner by the butcher, at the next by the tailor, and so on until I am afraid to look around for fear I would meet them all face to face.

HARRY. That's promising. If I ever want you at a minute's notice. I'll know just where to get you. *(Noticing skeleton for first time)* Hello. Who's your friend, Pierre?

PIERRE. Oh, pardon me, Harry, for not introducing you. *(Business of introducing)* Mr. Bright, I would like you to meet Mr. Cohen, the builder and owner of my wearing apparel.

HARRY *(bowing and shaking hands).* Charmed, I am sure.—But, I say, Pierre, tell me what have you ever got this thing for?

PIERRE. I'll tell you, Harry. I am working on a picture, as you see *(Pointing to canvas on easel)* which, when finished, will be known as "Death." I expect this to be my masterpiece, the outcome of a most strange and weird dream. It was necessary for me to paint a skeleton in one part, and while passing Shark's, the pawn-broker's, last night, I saw this for sale and spent my last cent to acquire it.

HARRY. And now you are dead broke because of this note from your uncle.

PIERRE. Exactly, only more so because I have run pretty heavily into debt, fully expecting that my uncle would still play the part of the "Good Samaritan." If he had only held off until I had completed this picture, all would have been well.

HARRY. Well, don't feel so bad about it. If you have to submit to being put out of your home, you can always find a welcome in my place.

PIERRE *(patting* HARRY *on the back).* Thank you, Harry. Perhaps some time I can repay you for all you have done for me. You have gotten me out of so many scrapes that I am beginning to feel as though you will find a way out of this one. *(Heavy footsteps are heard outside and finally a loud knock on the door)*

PIERRE *(excitedly).* The landlady. Harry, it's all up.

HARRY. Hide, quick.

PIERRE. It's of no use. *(Loud knocks on door)*

HARRY. Hide, I say, and let me handle her. *(*PIERRE *retreats behind screen.* HARRY *pulls door open very quickly and* JIMMIE MAGUIRE *falls almost into the middle of the room)*

JIMMIE. For the love of Mike, why didn't you say come in before you opened the door that way? You didn't answer me knocks, so I was just peekin' to see why. Me mudder says she wants de rent.

HARRY. I don't owe your mother anything, boy. What are you talking about?

JIMMIE. Oh, gee! I thought you was Mr. Arto.

HARRY. So it's Mr. Arto you wish to see?

JIMMIE. Sure. Where is he?

HARRY. Mr. Arto is out at present.

JIMMIE. He is not. You can't kid me. Believe me, if me mudder don't get the "cush" he sure will go out. *(Demonstrating with a kick)*

HARRY. See here, young man, you're pretty impertinent. I told you Mr. Arto was out. Now, how do you know that he isn't?

JIMMIE. Me mudder saw him come in wid a bundle last night, and I know he didn't go out since.

HARRY. It is possible that Mr. Arto was called away some time during the middle of the night.

JIMMIE. Nix on dat stuff. Me fadder is on dis beat and he knows the only guy that left our house last night was Mr. Wilson, downstairs. He works on the newspaper.

PIERRE *(coming from behind the screen)*. It's no use, as I told you, Harry. The Maguires know every movement in this vicinity.

JIMMIE. Say, me mudder says she ain't going to wait any more for your rent. What do you say about it, huh?

PIERRE. Now see here, Jimmie, you tell your mother that——

JIMMIE. Nix, nix, no more delay stuff. If you don't send the money down with me, me mudder's coming right up to put you out. *(Poses with hand out to receive money.* HARRY *slips hand of skeleton into* JIMMIE'S *hand.* JIMMIE *turns at this to face skeleton)*

HARRY. Meet Mr. Cohen, Jimmie.

JIMMIE *(jumping)*. Holy Smokes, there's murder been done! [EXITS *in great confusion*

HARRY. So long, Jimmie!

PIERRE. Jinks, Harry, you and I better drop everything and get out of this. That little imp is his mother's pride and joy and in about two minutes the old lady will be up here with the axe, ready to annihilate everything. Come on, let's get. *(Begins to gather a few things)*

HARRY. There's no need of that, Pierre. Cohen scared the imp, why won't it scare the imp's mother?

PIERRE. Not for me. You may stick it out, but I am a strong believer in safety first. Take my advice and come. *(Heavy footsteps and loud noises heard outside.* PIERRE *drops everything and falls onto stool).* Good night!

HARRY. Brace up, Pierre. Where there is life, there is hope.

MRS. MAGUIRE *(off stage).* The idea of scarin' the wits out of a poor innocent, harmless child.

JIMMIE *(off stage).* Yeah, Mom. He put the hand right in my hand.

PIERRE. I told you so. We're in for it, all right.

HARRY. Don't give in. Face it bravely. We'll crawl out somehow.

MRS. MAGUIRE *(off stage).* Come on in, child. What are you afraid of? Your mother's with you, me darlint boy. *(Loud shuffling of feet)*

JIMMIE. Nothin' doin'. You don't catch me going in there. Nix, I'm going out.

MRS. MAGUIRE *(off stage).* Ah, the darlint child. He's half the wits scared out of him. Well, we'll see——

PIERRE. Now I lay me down to sleep——

MRS. MAGUIRE *(bursting in door with duster raised over her head).* See here, Mr. Arto, it ain't bad enough to be owing me ten weeks' rent, but you be after scarin' me child to death. *(All this time she is threatening both* HARRY *and* PIERRE *with the duster)* I want an explanation of this, and I want it quick.

HARRY. Pray calm yourself, Mrs. Maguire, and I am sure we can explain everything.

MRS. MAGUIRE *(coming very close to* HARRY*).* And who are you that you'd be after givin' me advice? Does your advice collect my rent? Butt out. And now. Mr. Arto, what are you going to be doin'?

PIERRE. Now really, Mrs. Maguire, I told you——

MRS. MAGUIRE. Yes, and you told me the same old story for the last time. I'm determined, I am. Put up or out you go.

PIERRE. Now, Mrs. Maguire, can't you——

MRS. MAGUIRE. No, I can't, I won't, and what's more, I don't want to. Them's my final terms and it's up to you.

PIERRE. Tomorrow, Mrs. Maguire, I am sure——

MRS. MAGUIRE. Tomorrow be blowed! Do you think I run a charity institution? *(Poses)*

HARRY *(coming up to* PIERRE*)*. Give her a check, Pierre.

PIERRE *(aside)*. But there are no funds in the bank.

HARRY. That doesn't matter. It will hold her off for a little while, anyway.

MRS. MAGUIRE. Well, am I a fixture here?

PIERRE *(quite relieved)*. Oh, yes, I had quite forgotten. You came after your rent, didn't you?

MRS. MAGUIRE *(aside)*. Can ye beat that? Did you think I came to take tea with you?

PIERRE. I am very sorry, Mrs. Maguire, but I haven't quite enough cash in the house, so if——

MRS. MAGUIRE. Shall I call me old man to put you out? You remember me terms.

PIERRE. I was just going to say, if you would accept a check, I would pay you in full.

MRS. MAGUIRE. I don't know much about them things, but I'll take a chance.

PIERRE *(writing)*. Twenty-five dollars, wasn't it?

MRS. MAGUIRE *(sweetly)*. Yes, sir, Mr. Arto.

PIERRE. There you are, Mrs. Maguire.

MRS. MAGUIRE. Thank you so much. The Lord bless you. *(As* MRS. MAGUIRE *turns to go out, she sees skeleton for first time. Screams)* Good Fathers!

[EXIT *hurriedly.*

PIERRE. Phew!

HARRY. Say, she's a piece of the old sod, all right. I expected every minute to have my head come in contact with that duster.

PIERRE. Wait till she finds there is no money in the bank. Oh, me! oh, my!—you and I had better write our farewell notes. *(Footsteps outside)* She's back. *(Starts quickly)*

HARRY. Impossible, Pierre. Your nerves are surely on edge.

PIERRE. Yours would be too if you were in this fix. I not only am in debt, but now, by giving a worthless check, I am liable to arrest. *(Loud knock)* I wonder who that can be. Maybe it's the police.

HARRY. Nonsense, boy. Shall I let them in?

PIERRE. You might as well. I don't care what happens. (HARRY *opens the door and* COHEN ENTERS)

COHEN *(to* HARRY*)*. T'ank you.

HARRY. Don't mention it.

COHEN. So, Mr. Arto, I can see you are enjoying the best of health.

PIERRE. Yes.

COHEN. Perhaps you can let me have a payment, yes?

PIERRE. I am sorry to say, no.

COHEN. No? Und why not?

PIERRE. Well, you see, the money I expected hasn't arrived.

COHEN. Und you expect me to wait so much longer?

PIERRE. Why, yes, surely.

COHEN. I cannot do it. Think of the loss. Twenty dollars at four per cent. interest for six months! Oi—I can't do it.

PIERRE. But I haven't the money and I can't pay you just now.

COHEN. Can't you give me something? Say five dollars?

PIERRE. No, nothing.

COHEN. Say four.

PIERRE. No, nothing.

COHEN. Say three.

PIERRE. See here, Cohen, I have told you I can't pay. So good-day.

COHEN *(excitedly)*. You want to cheat me! You want to rob me! If you can't pay me, I will have dose clothes back again. *(He snatches* PIERRE'S *coat from chair and starts toward door, but* PIERRE *catches one end and holds on)* Let go! They belong to me! You are trying to rob me!

PIERRE. See here, Cohen! Let go of that coat!

HARRY *(interceding)*. For heaven's sake, Pierre, give him a check and get rid of him, or you will surely have the police in.

PIERRE. Wait a second, Cohen.

COHEN. Vait a second? Haven't I vaited already six months? I want the money or the clothes.

PIERRE. I'll give you the money.

COHEN *(relaxing)*. Vell, vy didn't you say so before?

PIERRE *(replacing coat on back of chair)*. What do I owe you?

COHEN. Twenty-five dollars and six months' interest at four per cent.

PIERRE. Never mind the interest. I'll give you a check for what I owe you. *(Writes)*

COHEN. But the interest——

PIERRE *(sternly)*. Do you want the check?

COHEN. I only let you off 'cause I don't want to lose the trade.

PIERRE. Here, now don't bother me again.

COHEN. I am skinning myself, Mr. Arto. A thirty-five dollar suit at twenty-five and lose six months' interest——

PIERRE *(shoving him out)*. Good-day and get out.

[EXIT COHEN

HARRY. How often does that come in?

PIERRE. Once each morning for the last six months. When he finds there is no money to meet that check, yours truly will create a new fashion for the coming season. That of wearing a barrel.

HARRY. From the way he yanked that coat, I guess you're right. I was expecting every minute to see it part and let him tumble clear out of the room and down the stairs.

PIERRE. I wish it had. Well, Harry, I must do a little work on this picture if I can control my nerves enough to get started. *(Paints)* Do you want to read or criticise?

HARRY. I'd much rather criticise. *(Examining pic-*

ture) I don't think you show quite enough detail in the interior of that vault, do you?

PIERRE.. You boob! If you're going to criticise, do it justly. How am I to show detail behind a closed door?

HARRY. Well, you might paint the detail around here on the back. *(Pointing to position on back of canvas just behind door)*

PIERRE. Sit down and read. *(Footsteps coming up the stairs)*

HARRY. Another one of your friends, Pierre. Gosh, but you are popular!

PIERRE. I give up! *(Knock)* Come in.

MR. SNYDER. Goot-morgin alretty. *(Stands and looks at* PIERRE *with hands in apron)* I say, goot-morgin.

PIERRE. Good-morning. *(Pulling empty pockets inside out)*

MR. SNYDER. Ach, der same ole story! Vhen vill you pay me?

PIERRE. I don't know. I guess when I get the money.

MR. SNYDER *(aside).* Ach, by golly, I am dealin' wid a swindler! *(To* PIERRE*)* Well, young man, I vill not leave dis room until I get dose moneys. Do you expect me to feed you for nuttings? *(Aside)* Ooh, by golly, vot a brazen swindler!

PIERRE. Now, Mr. Snyder, what's the use of standing there when I tell you I haven't got the money?

MR. SNYDER. Ach in Himmel, do you mean to rob me? No, sir, here I stands und here I get dose moneys.

HARRY. You're up against a stone wall there, Pierre. The sooner you give him a check the better off you are.

PIERRE. I guess you're right. He isn't at all beautifying to the surroundings, is he? *(To* SNYDER*)* Do you want all cash?

MR. SNYDER. You bet I do! Do you t'ink I vant pictures?

PIERRE. I'll give you a check.

MR. SNYDER. Vell, dat vill do very nicely.

PIERRE *(writes).* Here you are. The full amount.

MR. SNYDER *(aside).* He ain't such a bummer after

all. I t'ank you a t'ousand times. Is there anything you want dis morning? Some fine saurkrout, bologna, or sumtdings like dot?

PIERRE *(to* HARRY*)*. I haven't got the heart, after giving him a bum check.

HARRY. It's up to you.

PIERRE. No, I don't think so, Mr. Snyder.

MR. SNYDER. Perhaps tomorrow, yes?

PIERRE. Yes, perhaps tomorrow. Good-day.

MR. SNYDER. Gooden Tog. [EXIT

PIERRE. Well, by ginks, I hope that's the last one I owe any money to! I suppose, though, the butcher and the furniture man will be in, too. *(All this time* HARRY *has been staring at the skeleton and seemingly deep in thought)* Say, Harry, I have had so much excitement this morning that I have forgotten to feel hungry. I've got just twenty-five cents left. I know where we can get a pretty good lunch for two on that. Besides, it would be a good thing if you and I were absent when the mob returns—there's more room to run out in the street.

HARRY. Say, Pierre, I've got a scheme.

PIERRE. I said eats. Come on—"Drink and be merry, for when we return we die."

HARRY. This scheme will pull you out of debt, or I'll eat my hat.

PIERRE. You can think better on a full stomach. Explain it while we eat.

HARRY. Are you in on this scheme?

PIERRE. If it will clear me of my debts, I'm in on anything.

HARRY. Well, then, there is one thing to be done before we go to lunch. Let me have paper and pencil. (PIERRE *gets paper and pencil.* HARRY *writes)* What did you say your uncle's address is?

PIERRE. 12 West 174th Street.

HARRY *(reading)*. Now listen to this. "Mr. John Styles.—Having had occasion to call on my old friend, Pierre, this morning, I was greatly surprised to find

matters in a very serious state. I am sorry to say, I am obliged to inform you of his death."

PIERRE. Dead?

HARRY. Sure. You're dead broke, anyway. *(Reads)* "I would suggest that you come immediately, in order that you may make arrangements. Sorrowfully yours, Harry Bright."

PIERRE. No, Harry, I can't agree to that. How am I to come to life again?

HARRY. Leave that to me. Come now, you've agreed. Call Jimmie to take this to your uncle.

PIERRE. I don't like it, but I suppose it will work out all right. *(Calls at door)* Hey, Jimmie! Oh, Jimmie!

JIMMIE *(off stage)*. What do yez want?

PIERRE *(calling)*. Do you want to earn a few pennies? I have an errand for you to do.

JIMMIE *(off)*. Few pennies! What do yez take me for, a kid?

PIERRE. Come on up and I'll tell you about it.

JIMMIE. All right.

HARRY. Offer him a half-dollar when he comes back.

JIMMIE *(off stage)*. I'm here. What is it?

PIERRE. Come on in. I have a note I want delivered to my uncle.

JIMMIE. Not much! Chuck the note and the money out here and maybe I'll take it.

HARRY. I'll take it to him. [EXIT

PIERRE. I wonder how it will all come out?

HARRY *(re-entering)*. I arranged with Jimmie to take the note and collect his fifty cents when he returns. Now for that feed you spoke of and I'll explain the whole business to you.

PIERRE. I don't like it, Harry, but I'm no quitter. Come on. [EXEUNT

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as* ACT I. *One hour elapses.* HARRY *and* PIERRE ENTER, *talking.*

PIERRE. Well, Harry, that's the greatest I've ever heard.

HARRY. And I have a feeling it's going to work like a charm. *(Looking at watch)* Whew! We've been gone an hour. Come on, we'll have to prepare for your funeral or your aunt and uncle will walk in on us.

PIERRE. What's first?

HARRY. Have you a night-shirt?

PIERRE. Yes, one that is more holy than righteous.

HARRY. Good. That will be better than a new one. Slip it on old Cohen.

PIERRE. There you are.

HARRY. Now, into bed with him. *(Places skeleton, covered with night-shirt, in bed)* That completes the preparation. Now, all we have to do is to await the mourners. But wait. We've got to find a suitable hiding place for you. Let me see.

PIERRE. Under the bed.

HARRY. No, that won't do. If possible, we want a place where you can see the fun. If you got under the bed, there wouldn't be any room for your feet.

PIERRE. I know a few others whose feet are quite evident. How about behind this screen? I could peek over.

HARRY. That's a good place. Now, when you hear anyone coming, dive behind there. *(Outside is heard an auto horn)*

PIERRE *(at window).* The mourners have arrived. Uncle and auntie.

HARRY. Gee, we just got back in time! Quick, now, get behind the screen and don't let yourself be seen. (PIERRE *gets behind screen.* HARRY *pulls sheet completely over skeleton. Loud tread on stairs, knock.* HARRY *opens door and enter* MR. *and* MRS. JOHN STYLES,

dressed in deep mourning. MRS. STYLES *is weeping sadly)* Good afternoon, sir.

MR. STYLES. I received your note. Now let me know the particulars. (MRS. STYLES *sobs very loudly)* There, there, my dear, do not carry on so.

MRS. STYLES. Poor Pierre——

HARRY. The particulars are these. I had not been to see my friend in some time—oh, I guess about two months. When this morning I chanced to drop in——

MR. STYLES. Yes——

HARRY. I knocked several times, but received no answer. Intending to leave a note, I pushed the door and came in to find things just as you see them.

MR. STYLES. Yes. But how did you discover that Pierre was dead?

HARRY. Turning to leave the room, I noticed on the bed my friend Pierre. Oh, I cannot tell you how I feel the loss of so true a friend!

MRS. STYLES. Oh, my poor Pierre! Do let me take one last look at him. Oh, dear me——

MR. STYLES. There, there, my dear! Don't carry on that way.

MRS. STYLES. I will carry on that way. If you had helped the boy when he asked you to, he probably would have been with us today. Oh, John, how could you be so cruel to poor Pierre? (MRS. STYLES *starts toward bed.* HARRY *prevents her)*

HARRY. Really, Mrs. Styles, I wish you would collect yourself before looking at Pierre for the last time. I am afraid——

MRS. STYLES. Let me see him. I must see him. Oh, poor Pierre!

MR. STYLES. My dear, try and control your feelings——

MRS. STYLES. John Styles, how can you be so hard-hearted? Have you no feeling? Oh, poor Pierre! I must see him——

HARRY. I really cannot let you, Mrs. Styles.

MRS. STYLES. I will. Oh, oh, oh! I will!

MR. STYLES. Let her see him, Mr. Bright.

HARRY. Very well. (MRS. STYLES *draws sheet back, exposing skeleton. Faints on bed.* MR. STYLES *and* HARRY *rush to aid her)*

MR. STYLES. Good heavens! How terrible! Quick, some water, quick! *(While* MR. STYLES *pats* MRS. STYLES' *forehead with a handkerchief,* HARRY *rushes about excitedly for water, once cautioning* PIERRE *to be quiet)* For pity sakes, man, get some water and don't do so much running about!

HARRY *(bringing vinegar from behind screen).* I can't find any water, but here's some vinegar. That's very good.

MR. STYLES. Let me have it quick! *(Applies)*

MRS. STYLES *(coming to).* Oh, John, where are we?

MR. STYLES *(heaving a sigh.).* There, there, dear. You're all right.

MRS. STYLES. Dear me, John, do be careful! You'll spill that on my dress. Oh, John, isn't it terrible? *(Sobs)* Poor Pierre! (PIERRE *slips off of box on which he has been standing to try and look over the screen)* What's that John?

MR. STYLES *(to* HARRY*).* Yes, what's that?

HARRY *(nervously).* I heard nothing.

MRS. STYLES. Oh, John, why didn't you help the boy when you could?

MR. STYLES. Now, I have told you time and—— *(Another tumble and noise)*

HARRY *(aside).* For the love of Pete! He'll spoil the whole affair. *(Coughs loudly and moves in chair)*

MRS. STYLES. There's that noise again. What is it?

HARRY. A noise? I didn't hear any.

MR. STYLES. Well, then, you must be deaf. I heard it very distinctly.

HARRY. I am afraid that both of you have become too much upset by this very sad affair. (PIERRE *succeeds in peeping over the screen and is seen by* MRS. STYLES*)*

MRS. STYLES *(screams).* John! *(All start)*

MR. STYLES. Heavens! What has happened?

MRS. STYLES. Oh, John, take me from this room! It's haunted, I'm sure!

MR. STYLES. Come, come, my dear. Collect yourself.

MRS. STYLES. I just saw Pierre look over that screen at me.

HARRY *(aside)*. It's all up!

MR. STYLES. Nonsense, my dear! Come, we must leave before you are ill.

HARRY *(aside)*. How am I going to get him to settle the bills before he goes? (MR. STYLES *assists* MRS. STYLES *to the door. Just as* MR. *and* MRS. STYLES *are about to leave, a terrible tramp of feet is heard outside and shouts of "We'll get him!" "I want my money!" "The robber!" etc. Then suddenly the door is thrown open and* JIMMIE, MRS. MAGUIRE, COHEN *and* SNYDER *rush in, all excitement, waving the bogus checks and demanding payment in all sorts of threats.* MRS. STYLES *retreats in horror.* MR. STYLES *tries to shout above the noise)*

MR. STYLES. Just a second. What's it all about? People, there is a dead man in this room, so please be quiet. *(The creditors all glance toward the bed and in unison exclaim, "Dead?" and then all with one thought turn and start to realize the amount of their loss by grabbing* PIERRE'S *possessions)*

MR. STYLES. Don't touch a thing in this room, and I will pay you all. *(All drop their belongings and rush with their bills toward* MR. STYLES, *each eager to be paid first)* One at a time, please. One at a time. You will all be paid. Now, Mrs., what does your bill amount to? *(To* MRS. MAGUIRE*)*

MRS. MAGUIRE. Twenty-five dollars, sir.

MR. STYLES *(producing roll)*. Here you are. Now, what's yours? *(To* COHEN*)*

MRS. MAGUIRE. Thank you, sir. *(Going toward bed and raising apron to wipe eyes)* Poor Mr. Arto! This is enough to break me heart! Sure, he was a fine young man.

MR. COHEN. Twenty-five dollars and eight months' interest at four per cent.

MR. STYLES. Here's twenty-six. I guess that will cover all. Now then, you're next. *(To* SNYDER. COHEN

removes hat and stands next to MRS. MAGUIRE*)*

MR. SNYDER. Ach in Himmel, it is about time. Ten dollars und ocht-und-swansic cents.

MR. STYLES. There. Now, I wish all you people would leave this room.

MR. SNYDER. Yas, sir. But first let me have just one look. Mr. Arto was a fine young man. *(As* SNYDER *and all move toward the bed to take a last look,* PIERRE, *in his endeavors to shake a threatening fist over the screen at them, slips and falls with the screen into the room. Everyone turns to see what has happened. In unison,* MRS. STYLES *shrieks;* MRS. MAGUIRE, *"Rascal!"* COHEN, *"Faker!"* SNYDER, *"Ach in Himmel!"* MR. STYLES, *"So!"* HARRY, *"Good-night!"* JIMMIE, *"What the hell!"*)

MR. STYLES. So, young man, this is your game! A trick to play on the sympathies of your aunt and uncle! Look at your aunt—in a state of prostration because of this shameful trick. You are no longer a nephew of mine. My interest in you is at an end. Never again call me uncle, nor appeal to me for aid, no matter how distressing your situation may be. (ENTER DETECTIVE "SLICK," *walking hurriedly to center of stage)*

SLICK. I am looking for a Mr. Arto. Does he live here?

MR. STYLES. Are you another of his creditors?

SLICK. I am Detective Slick of the Secret Service and am looking for a Mr. Arto.

MR. STYLES. There he is, and I trust he will be well punished for the injustice which he has just done me.

SLICK *(advancing to* PIERRE, *who is still seated on floor).* Are you Mr. Arto?

PIERRE. Guilty.

HARRY *(to* MR. STYLES*).* Mr. Styles, Pierre has been falsely accused. This whole affair was planned by me and dared to be carried out by your nephew.

MR. STYLES. Have I not just denounced him as my nephew? Why do you insist that he is?

HARRY *(to* SLICK*).* Officer, if there is to be an arrest made, I want to take my share.

SLICK. Arrest? I have not come to make an arrest, but to recover some stolen property.

PIERRE *(rising)*. Surely, you don't expect to find it here?

SLICK. Now don't get excited, young man. Just let me ask a few questions. Do you remember buying anything last night?

PIERRE. Why, no. Why?

SLICK. Easy now. Just think again. Don't you remember buying anything of a pawnbroker?

PIERRE. Oh, yes. I bought a skeleton of Shark.

SLICK. Well, I have been engaged by the wealthy Mrs. Vanderdough to locate that skeleton. Three nights ago thieves broke into her house and stole nearly everything in sight, including this skeleton.

PIERRE. Well, surely you don't connect me with that story.

MR. STYLES. That wouldn't surprise me in the least.

SLICK. Now don't interrupt and I will explain all in time. Old Mr. Vanderdough had given his wife a great many very fine gems and, expecting to be robbed some time or other, she placed these jewels in the skull of this skeleton, never thinking that a thief would look in such a place. Rather clever, too, at that. However, this skeleton was taken, and being found worthless by the robbers, was pawned at Shark's, and from there I have traced it to you. Have you still got it?

PIERRE. Yes, here it is.

SLICK. Excellent! The jewels are all here. *(Having extracted them from the skull. Exclamations of "Oh!" and "Ah!" from all)* Young man, let me congratulate you and give you this handsome reward for the return of the jewels. A check for $1,000.

PIERRE. Harry, don't wake me up! Thank you, officer. Uncle, if I may call you such, I am now in a position to repay you for all the expense I have caused you. Will you not accept this check and I will start anew and show you that I can be somebody?

MR. STYLES. Pierre, your last remark has vindicated you. If you will promise to give up art and take that

money and succeed in being someone, I will reinstate you in my good graces.

PIERRE. I promise. *(Shake)*

SLICK. Well, I guess I had better return these jewels to Mrs. Vanderdough.

MR. STYLES. Here, Officer, on your way over, have a smoke.

SLICK. Thank you, sir. Good-day.

ALL. Good-day.

COHEN *(advancing with style-book and samples).* Maybe, Mr. Arto, I can show you some of my latest styles.

PIERRE. No. You and Snyder may go. Mrs. Maguire, I give you notice. I will have an expressman call for my few things tomorrow.

MRS. MAGUIRE. Very well, sir.

[EXIT MRS. MAGUIRE, JIMMIE, COHEN *and* SNYDER

PIERRE. Harry, Uncle John and Aunt Ellen, at my invitation, I want you to supper with me and talk over the plans for my future.

ALL. We would be delighted. [EXEUNT

HARRY. Farewell, old Cohen. *(Shaking hands with skeleton)* You had more money than brains.

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